To: McGrath, Shaun[McGrath.Shaun@epa.gov]
From: Mike King - DNR
Sent: Sat 8/22/2015 1:00:43 AM
Subject: Re: File docs

Thx. Mike

Sent from my iPhone

On Aug 21, 2015, at 6:58 PM, McGrath, Shaun <McGrath.Shaun@epa.gov> wrote:

EPA Posts Gold King Mine File Documents

WASHINGTON – The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency is committed to working closely with response agencies and state, tribal and local officials to ensure public safety, to respond to concerns and to evaluate impacts to water and sediment that may have been contaminated by the Gold King Mine release. As part of this effort, EPA announced today that it is has made a number of Gold King Mine file documents available to the public. These include the EPA Task Order and the Action/Work Plan and Site Health and Safety Plan for the work at the Gold King Mine site.

The independent review announced this week by the U.S. Department of the Interior will analyze the incident, including the contributing causes. These documents, the independent review and EPA's internal technical examination of the incident that is now being conducted will provide greater understanding of the incident.

Given the experience with the August 5, 2015, blow out from pressurized water at the Gold King Mine, additional work is needed to ensure there are no more blockages holding back water which could contribute to future surges of contaminated water. The EPA and State responders have begun these efforts, but they have not yet been completed.

Gold King Mine file documents:http://www2.epa.gov/goldkingmine/epa-posts-gold-king-mine-file-documents

Background on the Gold King Mine
The Upper Animas Watershed, where the Gold King Mine is located, contains an estimated 400 abandoned and inactive mine sites, which were the focus of both large- and small-scale mining operations between 1871 and 1991. As a result, the Animas River and many of its tributaries have been historically impacted by high concentrations of heavy metals from both acid rock/mine drainage at mine sites and from naturally occurring metal loading sources not impacted by mining.

EPA, the State of Colorado, and other stakeholders have been working together since the 1990's to assess and address water quality impacts in the Upper Animas River and its

tributaries from mining related heavy metals. Numerous mine reclamation and mine waste cleanup projects have been completed in the watershed over the last 20 years. These efforts have included diverting runoff away from and capping mine waste piles, moving mine waste piles away from drainages, consolidating mine waste piles and revegetating mine waste piles.

Recent EPA activities conducted at the Gold King Mine site were undertaken with the state of Colorado to attempt to minimize concerns over environmental risks at the mine by relieving pressure build up from historic construction operations at the interconnected mines conducted by mining operators. The scope of EPA's work included improving site access, stabilizing the mine structure, controlling water and metal precipitate, and treating surge water as necessary.

Prior to this recent work, the Gold King Mine had not undergone any maintenance of the workings since 1991 because of a mine portal collapse that occurred in 1995, making the mine workings inaccessible. During the past two decades, conditions at the mine led to additional amounts of impounding of water behind the collapse and other collapses within the interconnected mine workings, raising concerns of a potential blow out.

Additional information

- History of the Gold King Mine
- Updates on the Gold King Mine response
- Red and Bonita Administrative Record

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